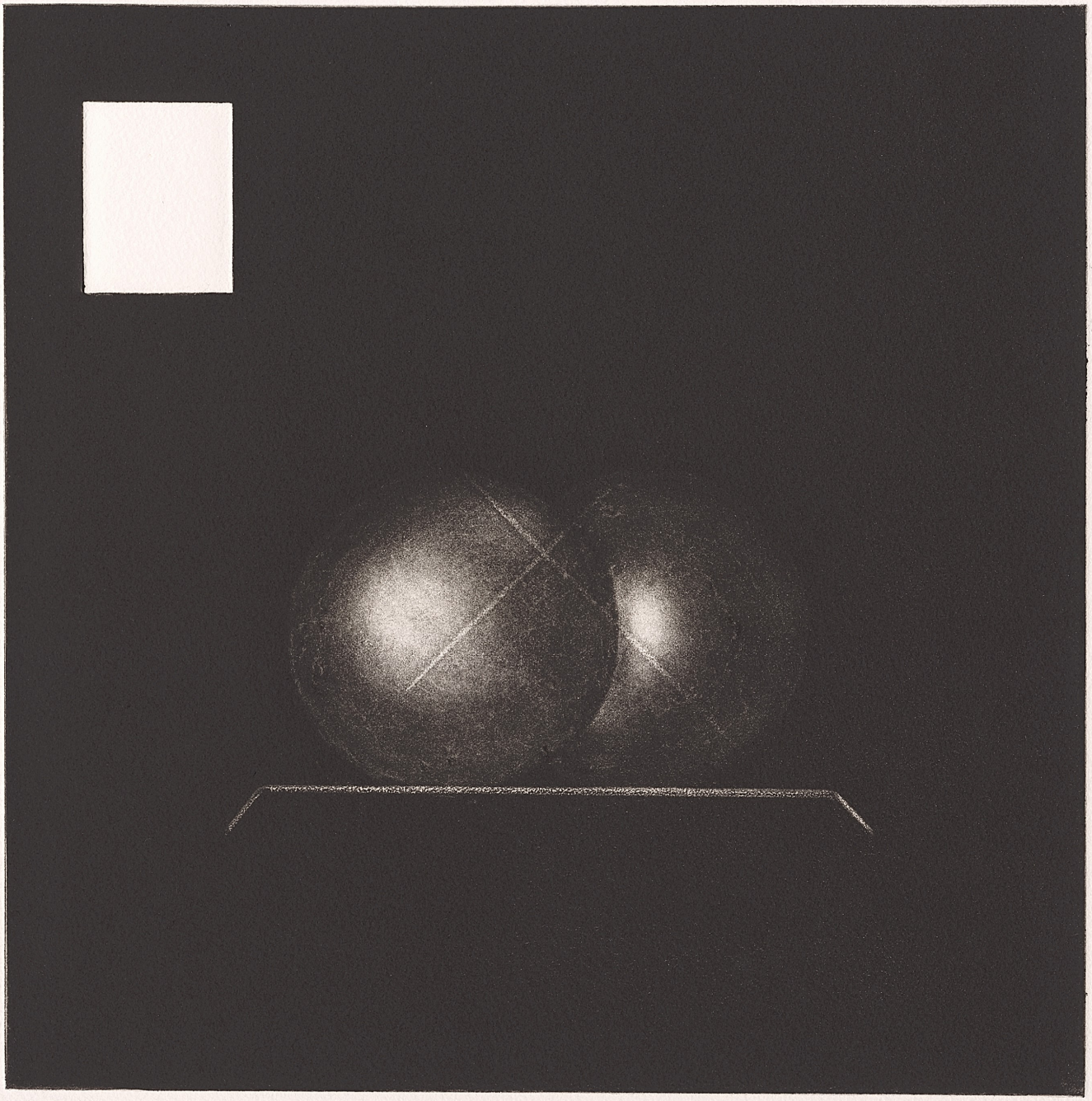
# The Same Sun

# Political Promises

You promised us a Brave New World,
Not one that's just a pale reflection of the old,
Where cancelled hopes grin back,
However much we strive to see new signs.
And the bright future that we pinned our faith on
Just mocks us, blankly, now it's here.



11/25

(mezzotint)

Shirley Jaffe '78

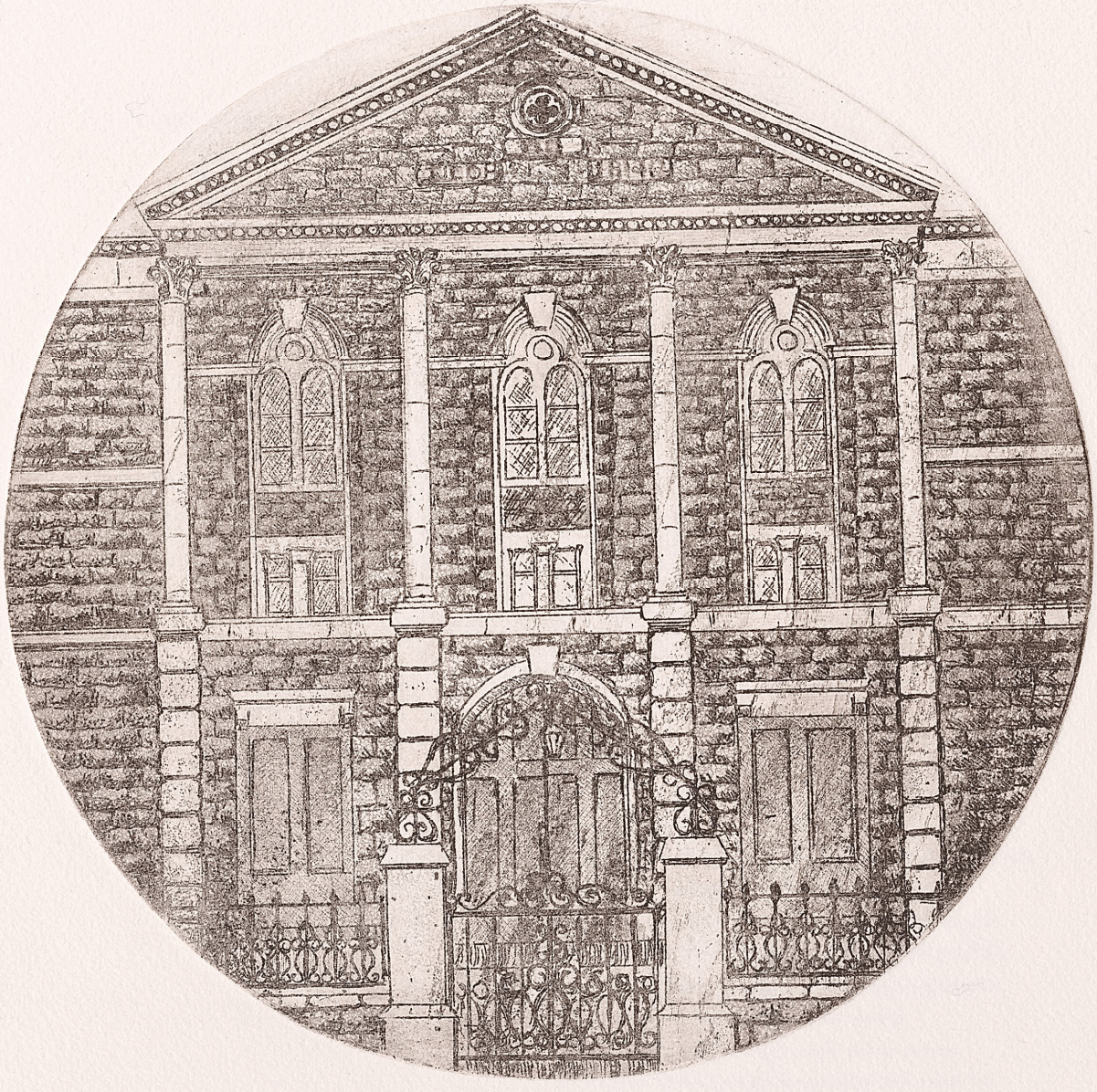
# Siloh

St Peter's Church was built of stone–
"Cathedral of the Rhondda," it was known.
Its bell called out to high and low,
But Pentre's souls don't need it now.

Moriah's sisterhood, I'm told,
Was crammed with women of its fold,
Who sewed and knitted between prayers.
I wonder, now, who goes–or cares?

At celebrations and Cymanfau Ganu
The walls of Siloh rang with praise.
"Cwm Rhondda's" strains soared up the hill.
Do many sing, or listen, there, still?

But singing with Norddfa's choir,
Is a memory I'll cherish, though
Nazareth become a Bingo Hall,
And Zion rots forgotten behind its wall.



11/25

Shirley James '78

# Calypso

He sauntered in as though he'd brought the sun
All the way from friendly Jamaica, man,
And with the warmth of his infectious smile
Would melt this English coldness for a while.
But the patients, sitting in the waiting room,
Impervious as mummies in a tomb,
Unwilling to encourage such alien nerve,
Or betray their carefully-preserved reserve,
Stared stiffly ahead – or at their feet,
And even the black face in the corner seat,
Chameleon-like, had adapted to their way,
And refused to give this hick even the time of day.
I wished the vulnerable newly-arrived
Might not have his friendliness so despised,
But I sat too far from him to communicate.

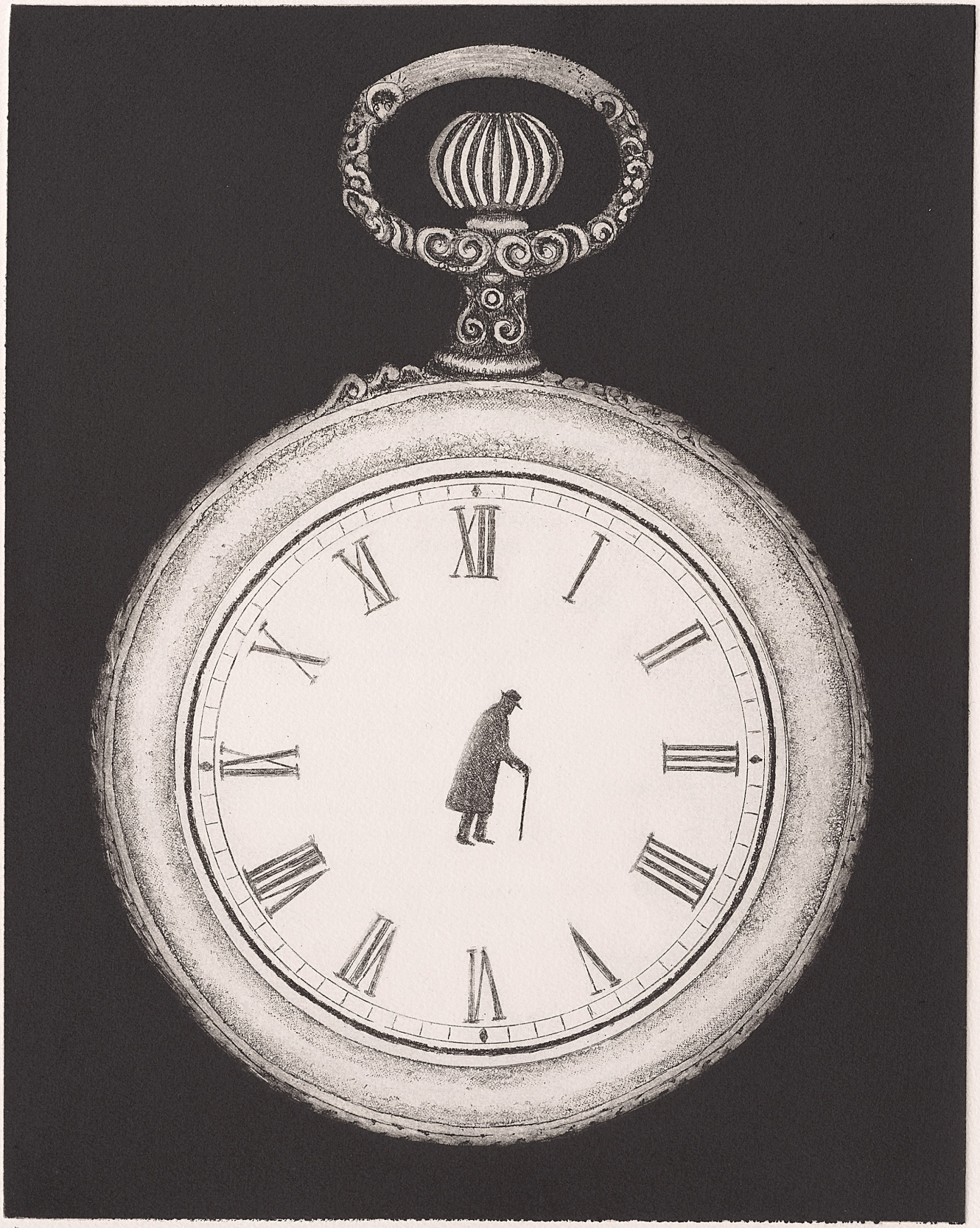
I wonder why the English keep so separate?
Is it shyness, or a coldness inherent in their race
– Or excessive regard for social grace?

Dr Mohan wouldn't come–
He said the old man's life was done.
Why prolong it for a week or so–
He'd been in now three months or more.
Over eighty, wouldn't you say?
Better let nature have her way.

And who's to say he wasn't right?
He'd been on duty half the night–
Coped with a serious case or two!
And now he had his notes to do.
He thought he really should be free
To enjoy this welcome cup of tea.

The nurse just did as she was told
–Though he hadn't seemed to her that old!
He'd laughed and joked, when not too ill,
And often seemed so lively, still.
She hadn't even time to stay
While his life just slowly ebbed away.

But she wondered who'd made the final decision
–Was it Destiny, or God–or Dr Mohan?



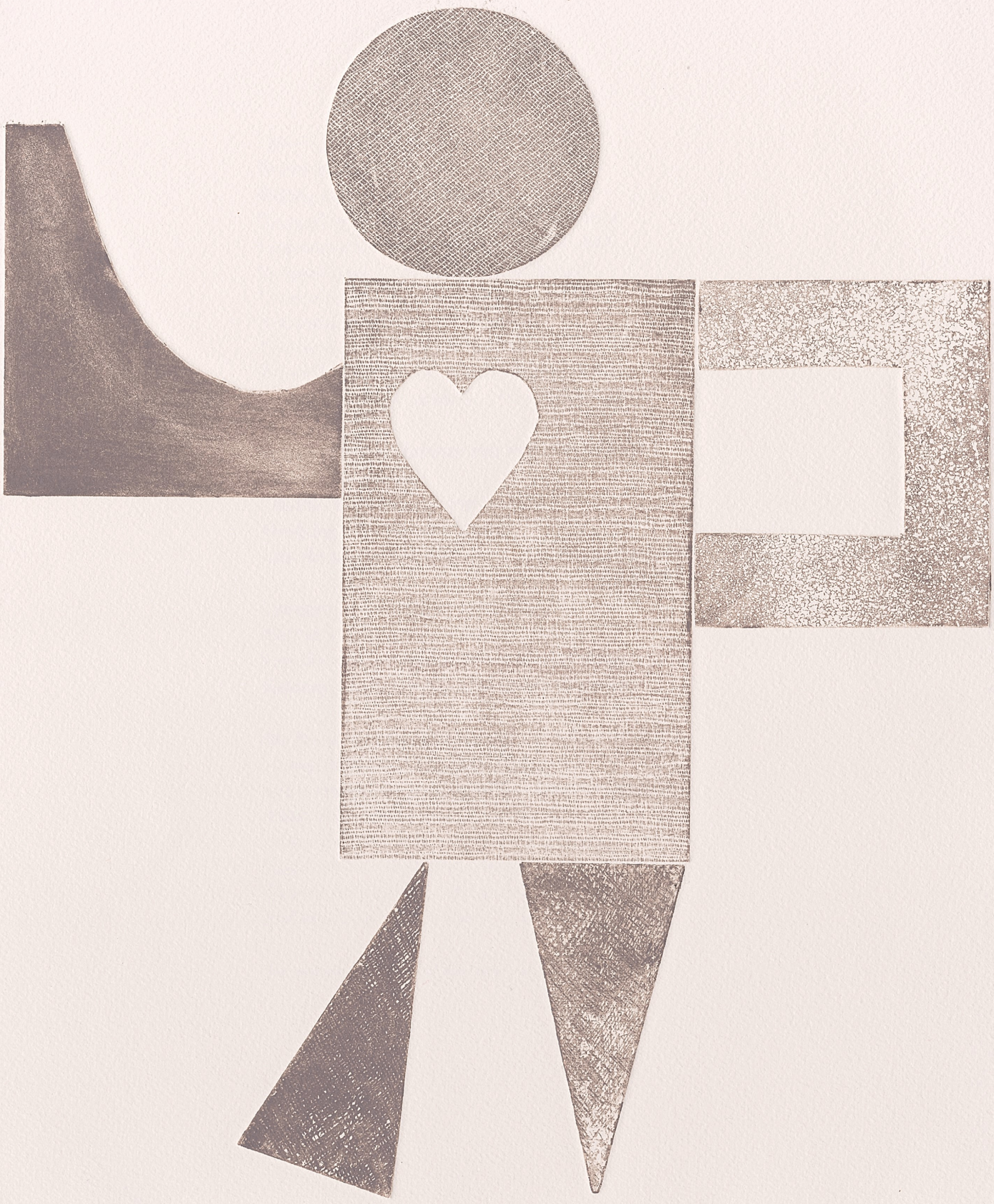
4/5

Shirley James '78

# Nurse out of Order

Snappy she was, and bustled in and out,
Forcing herself upon our consciousness
At regular intervals,
Organising her groups of cards and bundles of people
Into neat piles,
Raspingly calling out names,
Tartly, peevishly.
One for whom tidiness and order
Are always more important than people,
Who'd turned that Outpatients' waiting room
Into some kind of factory production line,
Where even the sun dared not shine
Except by previous appointment.

I knew her well, but still could be amazed
To see her, once, call back a child
Whose crime had been to put a sweet paper
Into a plastic bag marked, "Soiled Dressings,"
Instead of one marked, "Litter"
(Weren't they bound for the same incinerator!
Or did she think the child could read?)
But she made him put his hand inside that bag
And retrieve the offending paper,
While his mother numbly watched,
Silent, nervous,
A nurse who hadn't even Hygiene
Where her heart might once have been.



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Shirley James '78

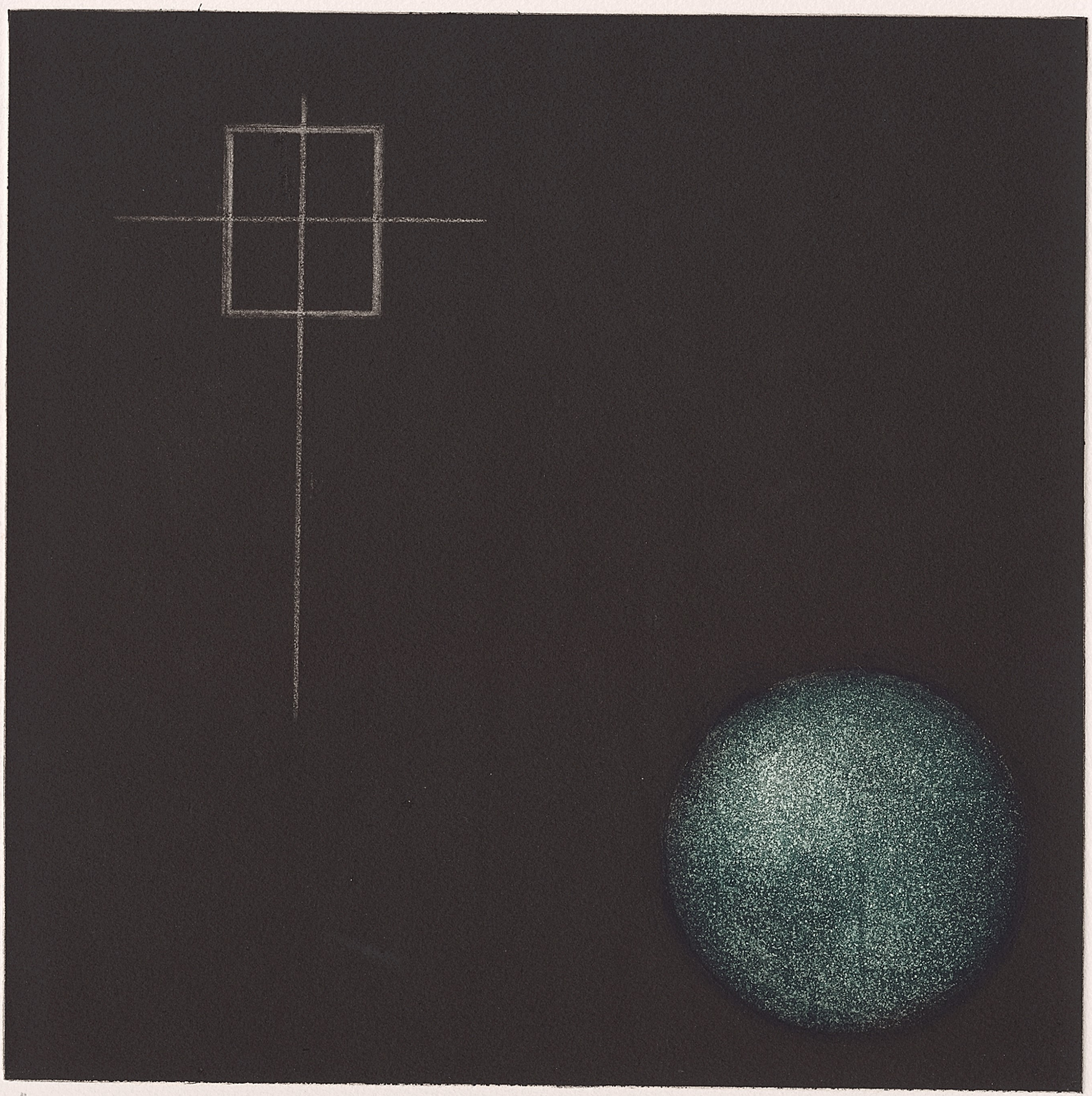
I heard her calling from a far-off place,
Repeating my name with calm persistence,
Willing me to focus on her face,
Compelling me to acknowledge my existence.
I remember I'm a child in the dentist's chair,
Drugged, still, from the effects of the gas
I'd inhaled before, but gulping now on air,
And forcing my legs to encompass
The distance between me and the porcelain sink
Where I can, "Spit up now," obedient to her will,
Take the proffered glass to, "Rinse, don't drink!"

But the memory shatters with her next command
-My identity shifts-
"Better not drink, yet, just lie still,
Drinking will only make you ill,"
-As she pushes the glass from my outstretched hand.

I struggle to sort out my confusion,
And for a few stark moments of lucidity,
I am thirty years on, and the mother of three,
Coming round, I recall, after an ear operation.

But the nurse has robbed me of my will to think.
I found it easier to slip back thirty years,
And complete my passage to the dentist's sink,
Allow the welcome sound to greet my ears
Of my mother's voice, expressing sympathy,
Take from her my father's folded handkerchief
To hold across my mouth, proud of the gory cavity,
And revelling in the petting I'd receive.

No wonder I shunned the raw reality.



11/25

(Mezzotint with etching)

Shirley Jones '78

# Pat

As a model, she never over-exposed herself
– Just what she was called on to reveal,
And draped herself, modestly, between sittings,
Jealous of her privacy.

She seldom bothers, these days, to conceal,
But leaves her suffering naked, for anyone to see.

11/25

Shirley Jones '78

"Keep Britain White," the slogans say
– Like detergent advertising.
But it isn't a Persil-bright we'd get
– Just a uniform shade of grey.

We've never been an insular race,
Despite our locality.
A mixture we were, before the French
Gave our language a change of face.

For centuries, War's refugees
Have flocked to tolerant Britain,
Enriched its life, absorbed its ways
– And not gone back in time of peace.

Our democracy has come to be
An international byword.
For freedom of speech and tolerance
Aren't practised universally.

Throughout the fifties, our government
Encouraged coloured immigrants
To leave their sun, and work for us
In jobs with small advancement.

And many of these, not surprisingly,
Wished to have their loved ones with them.
Some managed to do so within the law,
Some did so, illegally.

They've struggled, as immigrants always must,
And gradually been accepted.
A few have prospered by sheer hard work,
A few by ways not fair or just.

Mostly they're poor, and struggling still
To improve their standard of living,
A threat to poor whites competing for jobs
They now would all like to fill.

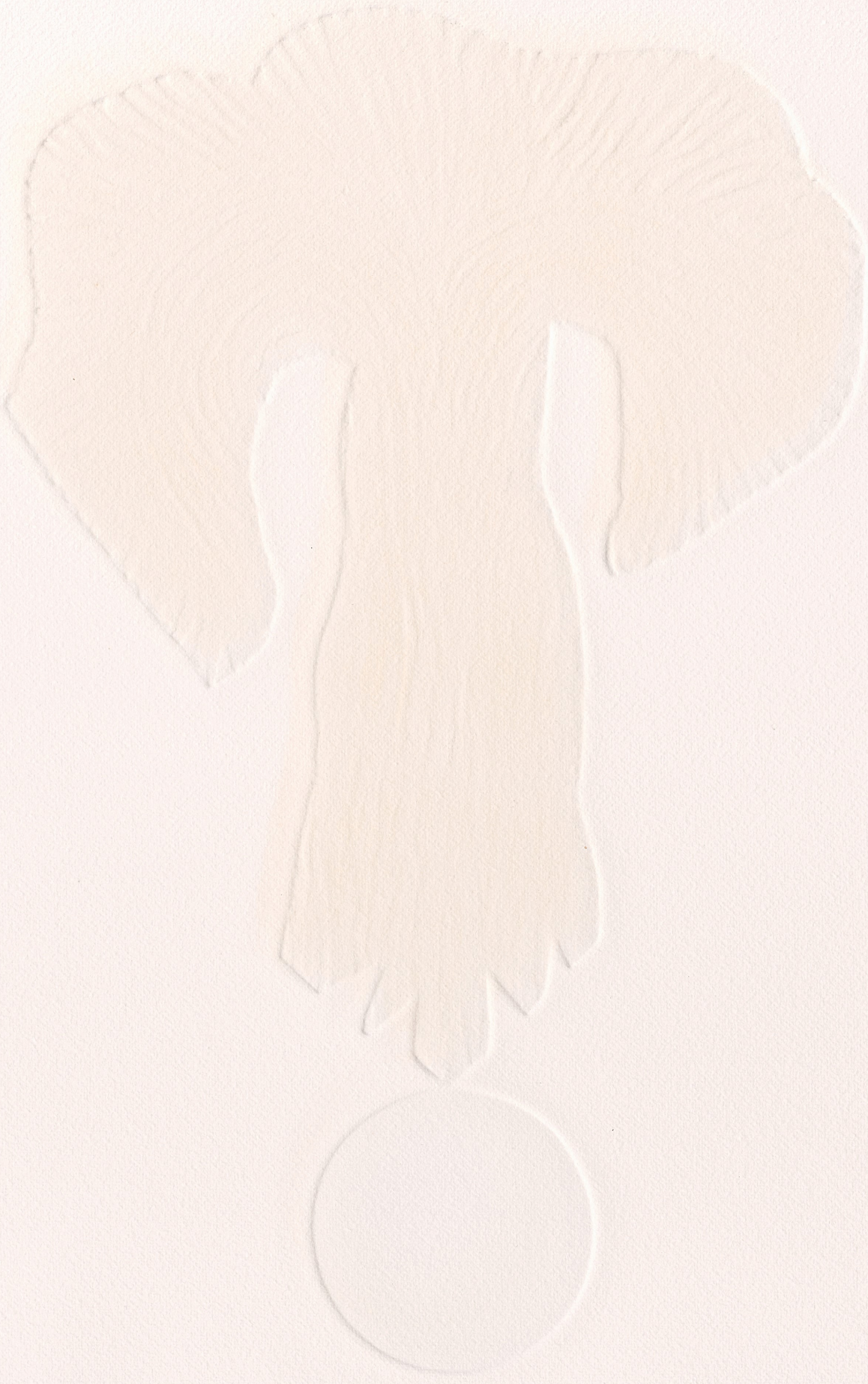
Housing's a problem creating hate
– Your house, after all, is your asset.
In an area invaded by immigrant poor,
Local house values depreciate.

It's fair that councils allocate
Homes to whoever's next on their list.
But it's hard to accept that a black family's next,
When you are a white one that's desperate.

Extremists say, "Let's deport them,"
As though they were obsolete goods.
But they're here to stay; they can't be sent back
To countries that just can't support them.

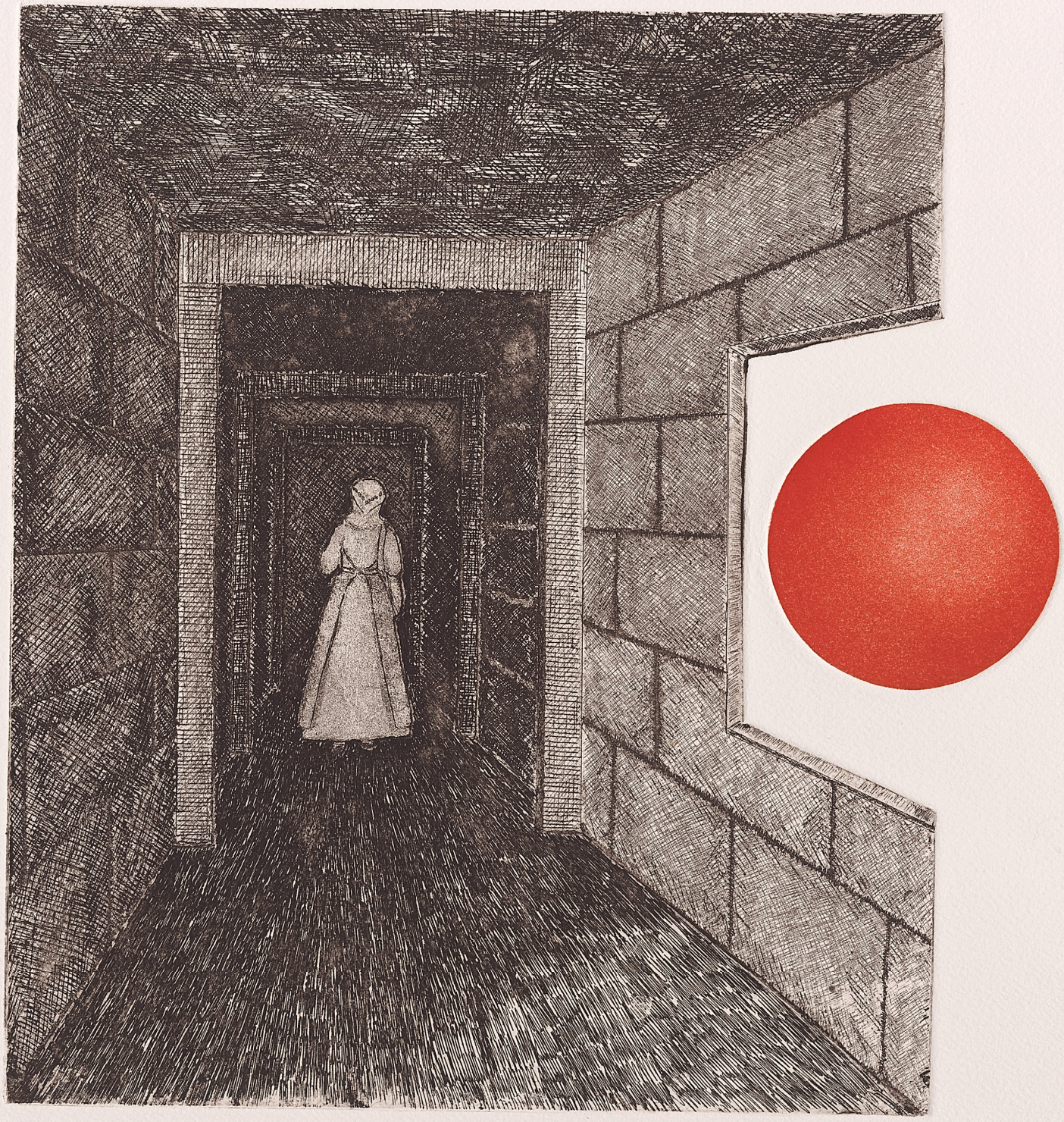
Can't we trust that their cultures and colour
Will enrich, not impoverish us,
While the uniform grey I spoke of before
Can again wear a badge that's more sinister.

Shirley Jones '7



The same sun shone for me then, as now,
But I was less aware of what its light revealed.
Perhaps the darkness into which I stept
Gave me the insight that I'd lacked.
Maybe the conscious act of ceasing to teach,
And stepping down to be, once more, a student
Opened my mind to learn more than a craft,
Taught me to observe more than I could visually record.

I stand now, on the other side of that experience,
Equipped with a set of tools I never had before,
Or never knew I had,
Earnestly seeking the skill to use them well.



11/05

Shirley Jones '18

**The Same Sun** is a
set of nine etchings and poems
by Shirley Jones, the link theme
being a version of the mandala symbol
appearing in each image. The text was
set in Bodoni typeface and printed on a
hand-press by J & N Moverly of Kenley
on mould-made paper by J Green of
Kent. The edition is limited to
twenty-five copies of which
this is number eleven.

Shirley Jones '78